

PROGRESS REPORT

YEAR 1 (2011)

Beringia: What Is Climate Change to You?

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for
Shared Beringian Heritage Program
National Park Service, Alaska

by
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Beringia: What Is Climate Change to You? (Beringia: WCCY) was initiated in April of 2011: to establish and promote the *Beringia: WCCY* effort, principle investigator Mille Porsild traveled via Nome to Chukotka with Norwegian team mate Joar Leifseth Ulsom and her two teams of 22 Polar Husky sled dogs—In Chukotka the team traveled by dog team as part of the *Nadezhda Hope Race* with support of snow mobile and all-terrain vehicle. The communities enroute were New Chaplino, Provideniya, Sireniki, Nunligran, Enmelen, Konergino, Egvekinot, Uelkal, and Anadyr. Through the race media coverage and at community gatherings in each village, the project was introduced to local community members and to the larger audience in Chukotka. The live experience was broadcasted via the GoNorth! programming at PolarHusky.com connecting it to 4500+ schools worldwide. Porsild met with partners to discuss how to precede once funds available for distribution in Chukotka, as well as with representatives of the Government of Chukotka. Through on-going conversation it was determined that the program involve collaboration with the Committee of Nature Use & Preservation of Environment of the Department of Agricultural Policy & Nature Use of the Chukotka Autonomous Region (Committee of Nature Use).

At the time of initial discussion while in Anadyr this Committee was in the process of its Deputy Head change. The project unable then to begin its planned work, Chairwoman of Committee of Sports and Tourism Irina Ryabukhina, invited youth from Greenland and Alaska to come to Lavrentiya, Chukotka to take part in the Beringia Festival. Thus Porsild returned to Chukotka via Nome at the end of July with a group of seven young people engaged in *What Is Climate Change to You?* programming in Alaska and Greenland. In the process issues with visa-free travel between Alaska and Chukotka were addressed with the help of the US Department of State, a development of value to the further travel of youth as laid out in the program plan. In the communities of Lavrentiya, Lorino, and Provideniya the team took part in the rowing competition and other festivities while sharing their *What Is Climate Change to You?* experiences with community members and press present. Porsild met extensively with representatives of the Government as well as other partners: program partner Natalia Kalyuzhina shared that she was preparing to possibly depart her position as Director of Beringia Nature-Ethnic Park, and options for the program headquarters locale and personnel in Provideniya were identified.

Upon her return from Chukotka in August, Porsild met with Elizabeth Shea at the NPS SBHP office in Anchorage. In September Porsild presented “*Beringia – The Bridge. Place of Real Learning: Hope & Friendship*” at SBHP’s Beringia Days 2011 in Nome. While in Nome, Porsild met with Deputy Head Olga Safonova, Committee of Nature Use of the Government of Chukotka and Deputy Head Ryabukhina of Sport and Tourism in regards to continued development of *Beringia: WCCY*. The conversation resulted in the understanding that the government and Committee of Nature Use are prepared to fully support the project, also logistically. In summary, primary concerns expressed by the government are that:

- the local community members receive payment because of recent experiences where community members reported to never have received the payment as agreed upon;
- findings are easily shared across Beringia;
- the research efforts become a collaborative opportunity also for Russian scientist and;
- the administration of the project in Chukotka is transparent.

The status of *Beringia: WCCY* is that an agreement will be made between the parties as the award funds are made available for Year 2 (2012) of the project by NPS by end of 2011. The timing was determined upon conversation with Erica Cordera of NPS on when to expect funds release for year 2; and this will allow for work to begin in January and prior to planned annual rendezvous in Chukotka in April. The agreement will detail project facilitation including the final list of participating communities, the involvement of partners in Chukotka, plan for payment facilitation and logistics commitment of the government, allowing community work to begin and the continued facilitation of the program as planned.